

BENT RIM BUGLE

The official newsletter of the MMBA - Issue #65 - Fall 2003

North Country Trail Information pg. 4

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The Michigan Mountain Biking Association (MMBA) is a 501-(C)(3) non-profit organization. We have 1,600 members in nine chapters throughout Michigan. The mission of the MMBA is to promote responsible mountain biking and to work toward the goals of common land access and natural resource protection through interaction with policy makers, the cycling industry, race promoters, mountain bikers and other trail users.

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Bent Rim Bugle

Editor:

Bryan Mitchell bryan@mitchell.com

Letters/Comments/Submissions
Bent Rim Bugle
5119 Highland Rd PMB 268
Waterford, MI 48327

Email: brb@mmba.org

MMBA Executive Director:
Todd Scott

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Michigan Mountain Biking Association
5119 Highland Rd PMB 268
Waterford, MI 48327
phone: (248) 288-3753

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DAN HARRISON

The Trail Ahead

president@mmba.org



"Growing Pains"

Way back in the day, a bike, was a bike, was a bike. It had balloon tires, one speed, a coaster brake, a big fat saddle, rubber pedals, and maybe a clothespin on the fork holding some old playing cards against the spokes, for that "motorcycle" sound. Heavy duty "newsboy" models might have a Springer fork. Then came "speeds." First three, then ten. Tires got skinnier, as did the saddles. All the genetic materials were in the stew, ready to mutate into the full gamut of two-wheeled self expressions we see on the streets, trails, and open roads.

For a while, a mountain bike was a mountain bike. Pieced together from the DNA of fat tire cruisers, multi-speed racers, and more than a dash of BMX, it was the bike that could go anywhere, do anything. For a while, it looked like the ultimate mutation had arrived, that the evolution of the bicycle had achieved a peak. But evolution never stands still. As a reflection of the society that produced it, the bicycle has continued to morph to suit our needs and our dreams. Minimalists have rediscovered the rigid singlespeed, while big hit aficionados have developed long travel suspended mounts. Trials bikes, DH, freeride, XC; what could all the riders of these bikes have in common?

Well, we all need someplace to ride. That's why the MMBA was born, and why it continues to be around. At times it's been a bumpy ride, but hey if we can't handle bumps, who can? Among our membership are some of the most aware, talented, avant-garde cyclists in the nation. It's clear that once marginal constituencies, notably DH and freeride, are becoming mainstream. Or forging their own course altogether. In my experience, the long term viability of a participant oriented sport depends not on its ability to produce a high profile professional elite, but to sustain and be sustained by a grass roots core that just loves doing it.

A hundred years ago, one organization the League of American Wheelmen was sufficient to represent the interests of every cyclist in this nation. Now the question is does the MMBA have enough scope to represent the interests of fat tire cycling here in Michigan? The answer appears to be "yes at least for now." Representation of the various disciplines on the Board of Directors, the Bulletin Board, and MMBA promoted events, indicates that the benefits of association with the MMBA are tangible. Relations between the MMBA and the Aggressive Riding Movement (ARM), for example, after a shaky start, have mellowed and deepened to the point where each can appreciate the strengths of the other.

Where things will go from here is a good question. Looking at kayaking, for example, I see a lot of crossover between internal disciplines. Sea kayakers respect and emulate the handling skills of the whitewater crowd, while whitewater addicts are discovering the joys of surf. On the other hand, skiing has evolved into highly specialized disciplines, where the equipment for one can scarcely function in the environment of the other

continued on page 15

News from the Executive Director – Todd Scott

Rust never sleeps nor do trail advocacy issues. It seems that just when we're starting to get our arms around the issues, the new one jumps up on the radar. This summer has been no different.

Transportation Enhancement

In April I was in Washington D.C. to shore up support for Transportation Enhancements in upcoming federal transportation bills. The support seemed rather unanimous for this program that finances most U.S. bike transportation facilities (e.g. on-road, rail-trail.)

But this summer, an appropriations sub-committee eliminated Enhancements and transferred the funds to build more roads. We contacted appropriation committee member Kilpatrick and Knollenberg. They restored Enhancements but gave states the ability to transfer these funds to road projects. In speaking with Congressman Knollenberg, he felt this was the best compromise we could get. And fortunately Governor Granholm is an apparent trail support so all may not be lost. She's told me emphatically that she "loves greenways." We will watch to make sure that love translates into continued funding.

According to Knollenberg, this bill now goes before the full House then back to committee, all of which should happen "sooner than you think."

LWCF Suffers Cuts

The Land and Water Conservation Fund gets money from extractive uses on federal land (e.g. mining and drilling) and puts it towards land acquisition, recreation, and conservation. The fund is authorized for \$900 million but this June 18th, the House Interior Subcommittee reduced it to \$198 million. Of this amount, \$100 million is for federal projects – the lowest amount allocated since 1974. . The other \$98 million is distributed to states and spent on priority items such as trails.

DNR Fees to Rise

Back in Michigan, Senate Bill 537 will increase the DNR Park motor vehicle entry fees as shown below. Given the DNR Parks budget crisis, this was not unexpected. The new fees will be as follows:

Annual Pass
\$24 residents (was \$20 since 1995)
\$29 non-residents
\$6 seniors over 65
\$18 Food stamp recipients

Daily Passes
\$6 residents (was \$4)
\$8 non-residents

Dexter Bike and Sport

Jeffrey Turck, owner of Dexter Bike and Sport has been busy recommending MMBA memberships to his customers. He's had much success and he encourages other shops to do the same. We greatly appreciate Jeff's efforts. Memberships are the Association's lifeblood and provide us with more clout when meeting with land managers, government officials, and legislators.

MMBA earns Land Use Hero Award

The Michigan Environmental Council (MEC) recently selected the MMBA as a Land Use Hero. According to the MEC, this award "reflects your organization's commitment to the stewardship of Michigan's precious land, water and community resources."

As part of the award, the MMBA is profiled in MEC's Land Use Heroes color booklet. A picture of volunteers working on the trail at Pontiac Lake made the cover.

By the time you read this, the MEC will have arranged press conferences, distributed the booklet to Michigan legislators, and made press releases to announce the award.

Other award recipients include the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, Friends of Novi Parks (the mountain bike trails are mentioned), and the North Country Trail Association.

MMBA Board Minutes on the Web

Board meeting minutes from the past couple years are now on our web site:

www.mmبا.org/library.htm#minutes

The North Country National Scenic Trail

The Issue in Brief

The North Country Trail (NCT) offers some of the best riding and hiking opportunities in Michigan. Some within the National Park Service, U.S. Forest Service, and North Country Trail Association (NCTA) want bikes eventually prohibited from the NCT singletrack as part of a Desired Future Condition (DFC.) The MMBA wants to maintain our current access and actively address any trail use issues. The MMBA believes that through continued effort and good sense, we can show that mountain bikers are a valuable, responsible, and desired North Country Trail user group.



NCT official marker.



Photos by Bryan Mitchell www.mountainbikemichigan.com

Mt. Bikers chat with a backpacking couple along Segment A of the NCT near Mesick.

stretching from New York to North Dakota. Michigan contains the largest portion of trail as it climbs the western edge of the Lower Peninsula and turns westward across the northern edge of the Upper Peninsula. To date, a little over 40% of the trail is certified with 27 miles added in 2002. The National Park Service is charged with overall administration of the trail. It is responsible for ensuring the trail is acquired, protected, developed, maintained, and operated in accordance with the National Trails System Act and the comprehensive management plan for the trail. To accomplish this, the NPS works with various other government agencies, non-profit organizations, and volunteers. Chief among the organizations is the North Country Trail Association (NCTA).

Background

Congress created the NCT in addition to many others National Scenic and Historic Trails with the National Trails System Act. According to the Act, "National scenic trails...

"I rode the Red Bridge section of the North Country Trail for the first time yesterday. Without a doubt, this was one of the best trails I have ever ridden." – Joe Partridge

will be extended trails so located as to provide for maximum outdoor recreation potential and for the conservation and enjoyment of the nationally significant scenic, historic, natural, or cultural qualities of the areas through which such trails may pass.

Other popular trails included in this Act are the Continental Divide, Iditarod, and Appalachian. While Congress stated the Appalachian "shall be administered primarily as a footpath," none of the other trails have such a limitation. When completed, the NCT will be roughly 4,600 miles long

While the entire trail is open to hiking, only portions are open to other non-motorized uses including mountain biking. The official NCTA position is that bicycling on this trail is "best accommodated" on some hardened surfaces (e.g. paved rail-trails), whereas riding on singletrack is "inadvisable at best."

What is the MMBA Doing?

We're getting more involved with all aspects of the NCT and working to become an integral partner. What we've done to date includes:

- *Establishing and building working relationships with the NCTA and NCT land managers (e.g. DNR, NPS, and U.S. Forest Service.)
- *Joining the NCTA as an Associate Member
- *Attending the recent NCTA Trail Building Workshop
- *Attending the Conference for National Scenic and Historic Trails
- *Offering our trail building experience and resources to the local NCTA chapters

*Educating cyclists on where, when and how to ride the NCT

*Addressing incorrect "no bikes" trail signage (see below) and trail head maps.

What Can You Do?

First, it is imperative that cyclists always follow the **Rules of the Trail** - see www.mmba.org/TrailRules.htm. The key rules for the NCT are to ride only on the sections open to bikes, control your bike, and always yield trail to those on foot or horseback. The latter is especially important. "Let your fellow trail users know you're coming. A friendly greeting or bell is considerate and works well; don't startle others. Show your respect when passing by slowing to a walking pace or even stopping. Anticipate other trail users around corners or in blind spots. Yielding means slow down, establish communication, be prepared to stop if necessary and pass safely."

Second, volunteer to help build and maintain the NCT. The North Country Trail web site has a fine calendar listing trail workdays (www.NorthCountryTrail.org). The MMBA is also looking at partnering with NCTA chapters for specific projects, which we'll promote on our web bulletin board. And, don't be bashful – wear your MMBA gear. While some NCTA folks may give you grief and test your mettle, we've found most are very friendly.

Third, consider joining trail advocacy organizations such as the MMBA (\$22) and the NCTA (\$30).

Incorrect Trail Signage

We've noted at least 30 signs (see picture) along the NCT that say the trail is closed to bikes. The problem is these signs are on bike-legal sections of the Huron-Manistee National Forest. We've contacted both the Forest Supervisor and NCTA to get these corrected. We've also heard of this same problem on DNR Forest land in the Upper Peninsula. The DNR asked the National Park



Incorrect trail marker.

Service to correct the signage but to date no one seems to know if this was done. If you see these signs and believe they are on bike-legal trail segments, contact me at execdir@mmba.org or 248-288-3753.

Frequently Asked Questions

Isn't this trail built by hikers only?

That's a common misconception.

From early on, mountain bikers have taken an active interest in building this trail. In fact, it was primarily mountain bikers that formed the Harbor Springs Chapter of the NCTA. In addition, the NCT uses the equestrian-built Shore-to-Shore Trail. Of course that's not to diminish the great efforts put forth by many hikers on this trail. It simply wouldn't be where it is today without the efforts of hikers, cyclists, and equestrians.



Photo by Bryan Mitchell www.mountainbikemichigan.com

Bike Legal marker at Dilling Road

Isn't this a hiker versus biker argument?

Not really because the two groups are not as distinct as some folks think. A recent survey found that most MMBA members are also hikers. A 1997 trail use survey found many people included both biking and hiking on their NCT visit.

Does the MMBA want bike access to the entire NCT?

No, that's neither realistic nor possible. First, portions of the trail pass through designated wilderness areas where mechanized transportation (including bicycles) is not allowed. Second, some trail segments are built on fragile, sandy soil that may not support increased use and might not be enjoyable to ride anyway.

What about creating separate parallel trails for each user group?

We were at a meeting where it was suggested that four trails were needed to separate all trail user groups. That's not practical from a cost and labor standpoint not to mention the added impact on the forest. Imagine trying to get

From a 1997 trail user survey in the Huron-Manistee National Forest administered by Professor Carol "Griff" Griffin of Grand Valley State University:

*50% of the trail users were cyclists

*84% said mountain bike use on the NCT very desirable, desirable, or were neutral (25%)

*93% said the trail was not being used beyond its capacity

*8% disliked seeing mountain bikers on the trail, 43% enjoyed it, and 49% didn't mind.

easements across private land for that! A single trail is the most cost and labor effective solution. It won't divide up the limited funding, nor overburden the NPS and NCTA's management responsibilities. It requires a smaller footprint on the forest and requires less land to be purchased when the trail is increased. If segments of the NCT ever become too crowded, there are many other more practical solutions that have been successful on other trails throughout the U.S..

What parts of the NCT are open to cyclists?

Unfortunately we don't have the complete answer to that yet. However, we do have the information for the Huron-Manistee National Forest. It's on our web site (www.mmiba.org/nct.htm) along with maps. Also, all of the DNR Forest segments are open to biking except for the Jordan River Valley Pathway. We hope to soon have answers for the Hiawatha and Ottawa National Forests.

What does the MMBA bring to the NCT?

We have a large volunteer base that's very experienced in building and maintaining top-notch trails. Through our membership, we have political clout to help push NCT issues among legislators. We have access to grant funding that is unavailable to single-use, hiking-only trails. And in some underutilized sections of the NCT, having more folks on the trail helps keep it better defined and more enjoyable for all user groups.

Photos by Bryan Mitchell www.mountainbikemichigan.com



Riding through thick ferns south of 5 mile road.

The MMBA position on the North Country Trail

All non-motorized trail user groups should be actively involved when determining the North Country Trail management policy.

A multi-use, shared management approach along the entire North Country Trail is prudent, sustainable, and a wise use of taxpayer money.

There is a need for primitive, hiking-only trails on designated segments of the North Country Trail where such a limitation is required because of topography or to protect a fragile natural environment.



Riding through the beauty along the NCT south of Beers Road.

"Just spent my vacation on the NCT: 3 day's of riding solo and did not see another soul ...heaven!" -- Syd Tomloski

"On one particular trip I remember suddenly being compelled to stop by the beauty and a serenity of a particular portion of the trail. It was October and the bright yellow color of the forest was overwhelming." -- April Wasserman

NCT ride etiquette

Some folks have encouraged hikers to report all unpleasant user conflicts with trail cyclists to local land managers. Don't give them any reason to complain:

- Be pleasant
- Always yield the trail
- Don't ride in large groups
- Respect and expect other trail users
- Pack out your trash
- Don't ride in muddy conditions
- Never ride sections of the trail that are not open to bikes
- Be pleasant (it's worth mentioning twice)



The MMBA is a business member of the North Country Trail Association.

"The most fun I've ever had on my single speed was on the NCT last fall." – Jerry Serra
"The NCT Red Bridge section is some of the loveliest trail I have ridden" – Dennis Pitz



Photo by Bryan Mitchell www.mountainbikemichigan.com

What a view! Riding the NCT past an overlook south of Beers Road on segment A.

A Meaningful Ride

When is the last time I had a meaningful ride? I can't say for sure until today. I ride, train, race and nothing makes a normal ride worse than turning it into a training ride. But not today....

I've got this huge bathroom remodeling project at home and I've been working quite a bit on it. Today seemed to be a day where things slowed down and I was on top with only some excess scraps to box up tomorrow for the trash. So I called my good friend Brian Swenson, a fellow single speeder for a ride on our local trail at Sleepy Hollow. It's not the most exciting trail, but I came up with an 18-mile loop (with the advice from some wise Owasso riders) and was revved up for a long 35+ mile ride to help me train and ease the up and coming pain of the Ore-2-Shore race.

So when I called Brian he was recovering on the couch from 6-day workweeks for the last month or more. It didn't sound like he was real interested in riding but we made plans for later in the day. He was going to ride with me for my first lap and I was going solo for my second lap, finishing in the dark with lights. Good enough, lets rock...

We hook up and have a great pace going, knocking out about 16 or so miles when it starts getting strangely dark -- not normal dark. It begins thundering and lightning as we starting catching some sprinkles. It looks like a wet ride ahead.

We're in some thick woods a couple miles from finishing our first lap. We cross a wooden bridge and it's dark, very dark. I don't turn on my light only because I don't want an unfair advantage over my friend. As I cross this bridge in the dark, I am completely startled by 2 young girls crying next to the trail. They are just an arms distance from me and I barely saw them.

So we stopped and quickly saw that they were lost. They were camping and had followed their irresponsible uncles (13- and 14-years old) on the trail and into the woods. The uncles got irritated that their 8- and 9-year old nieces were following them and they booked, thus leaving the young girls stranded. Now, some time later the girls hadn't found their way out and were completely lost amongst the thunder and lightning. And worse, the sky was getting darker still.

I quickly told them we'd walk them out and that I have a light (An H.I.D. baby!) so they are safe now. After about ten steps I notice one of the girls isn't even wearing shoes! I told them we could cover much more ground if they just jump on our bikes and we ride out. So, here we are, in the woods, in the dark, a big storm looming with two lost, scared girls joining our ride out and to the safety of their campsite!

Apparently I got the chatterbox of the two because she gave the full rundown how they managed to get into the woods to begin with. To make a long story short, they were staying with their grandparents and she was convinced that her uncles were "gonna get a rash of yelling from Gramma" as soon as she found out they ditched them in the woods.

We made it to the campground and no sooner than we get off the trail to the paved campground road, there's a couple teenager boys walking next to a truck. Not seeing my passenger, a lady in the truck rolls her window down and asks if I've seen a couple girls. I leaned over and asked, "Does one of them look like this?" Grandma wasn't too happy and said the girl shouldn't have wandered from the campsite. I informed her that the uncles had bolted in the woods trying to ditch the girls. The boys both completely denied this in unison. Whatever way it happened, someone was going to get a good butt chewing for sure.

By the time Brian and I rode the pavement back to the trailhead, it was nearly pouring. I canned my second lap due to the rain, the darkness, and my semi-slicks, but really it was because I had just made my ride mean something. I remember the little chatterbox saying she was so happy they didn't meet bad men on the trail.

Leave it to a lost 8-year old girl to make middle-aged slob like me feel like a super hero. We didn't get the girls names and didn't give them ours. We didn't stand around and talk to the grandparents. We took off as soon as we knew the girls were all right. I don't even think there was time for a thank you.

Nonetheless, it was the best ride I've had in years. ~ Frank Krol, Mid-State Chapter

Freeride Update

IMBA Standards

We, the MMBA, have asked IMBA to publish more specifications for building technical trails. They are currently doing just that. Having published standards helps tremendously with liability issues. Harv Seeley provided IMBA with a wealth of Burchfield trail construction and maintenance information. We hope to see the publication in early 2004.

Stony Creek

The Park Superintendent for Stony Creek has asked the MMBA to submit a proposal for a technical riding/skills area. Mike Moss (MMBA Stony Creek trail coordinator) and I are working on such a proposal modeled after the skills areas in Whistler, Copper Mountain, and elsewhere.

We'll use the Whistler Trail Standards as well as the latest trail specs from IMBA and our Burchfield group. The area will likely include obstacles such as elevated platforms, drops, tee-

ters, rocks, logs, and more.

If the Park and Metropark Planning accept our proposal, we could expect to begin construction early next spring. We've already had an outpouring of support from people with solid construction backgrounds. We're looking to set a high standard with this project so that it might be duplicated at other parks across Michigan.

Our proposal will also include plans to lengthen the current singletrack trail, perhaps developing it into a complete loop. *Todd Scott*

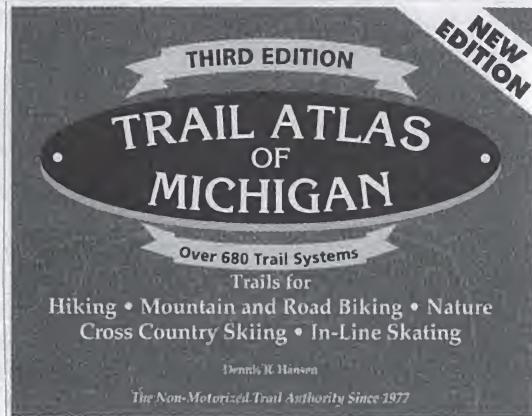
"Incredible stuff from Michigan!" – Jenn Dice, IMBA's Government Affairs Director introduces the Burchfield design notes to other IMBA staff.



Photo by Bryan Mitchell www.mountainbikemichigan.com

Dropping in at Burchfield Park in Lansing.

Trail Atlas of Michigan, 3rd Edition



The 25th Anniversary Edition! This 3rd Edition is totally revised for 2002. The first revision since 1997. The only comprehensive guide of non-motorized trails in Michigan. Covers hiking, x-c skiing, mountain and road biking, in-line skating and nature trails. Over 680 trail systems, 789 pgs, 11" x 8.5" & 5 lbs! Every trail entry includes at least one map (often more), addresses, phone no's, web sites, trail head directions, complete trail descriptions, difficulty ratings, general trail information and much more. 7 pages of C/C & CVB phone No.& web sites for easy trip planning. Time tested (25 yrs) trail location system for every part of the state. 11 page index! The undisputed non-motorized trail authority for Michigan since 1977.

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Hansen Publishing Company, 1801 Birchwood Drive
Okemos, MI 48864

The Chain Drive: A Blast on a Bike

By Kathy Abbott

"Do you like distance? We have distance! Do you love single track? We have that too! Do you want obstacles? This is your weekend!" So stated the brochure for the Ninth Annual Portage Health System-Keweenaw Chain Drive Festival, held June 14 and 15, 2003 in Hancock and Houghton, Michigan.

Nearly 400 wheels buzzed on the pavement as close to 200 bikers followed a police car from the starting point in Houghton, crossed the Portage Lake lift bridge, and turned right toward Ripley before turning right again and riding underneath the bridge where they no longer had to follow behind the police car at 17 mph. All stops were let out as riders fought for the lead before heading up a gravel singletrack which led onto M26 for a short distance before a paved climb led into the woods and the trails of Maasto Hiihito.

Gorgeous, sunny weather, friendly volunteers and enthusiastic bikers combined for a weekend of biking fun. Competitors in the 16 and 32-mile races on the Maasto Hiihito trails in Hancock found plenty of uphill climbing, rocky descents, singletrack along cliff's edge in shady woods and even an occasional grassy field along the course. The scenic vistas were hard to beat if a rider could take his or her eyes off the trail for a moment to glance around.

There were also ten and 16-mile guided tours for riders who wanted to see the sights and preferred a leisurely pace to a body-beating race. Volunteers led the guided tours, and many volunteers put in hundreds of hours planning and organizing the race.

The 16-mile race course was designed for easier riding to appeal to a wider range of riders, according to Bill Marlor, Chief of Course. "The 32-mile was designed to stretch the limits of the elite racers' abilities. It had a mix of technical trails and some very nice single track on the Churning Rapids trail system. It had steep climbs and steep descents with lots of the Swedetown Gorge riding left for the end of the race when the riders were already tired," Marlor said.

Jeff Juntti of Marquette, MI, who took second in the men's division of the 32-mile race agreed that the end of the race was the toughest part. "I'm sure I'll be back to the Chain Drive next year," he said, "but you don't need to keep those last hills in there for my sake. They just about killed me."

Juntti competes in many races in the UP and northern Wisconsin and said the Chain Drive course was well laid out and a lot of fun. "You definitely won't fall asleep on the course," he said. "With all of the twists, turns, ups and downs, you have to be paying attention. All in all, the course is a lot of fun." Chris Pagels of Brussels, WI took first in the 32-mile race with a time of 2:44:23, followed by Juntti and Dan Griffin of Stevens Point, WI. In the women's division, Lori Violetta of Marquette came in first (3:30:31), followed by Mary Connor, also of Marquette.

In the men's 16-mile race, Sam Kilpela of Atlantic Mine, MI, took

first with a time of 1:14:37; Bryan Fish of Green Bay, second; and Mikael Kilpela of Atlantic Mine, third. In the women's 16-mile competition, Kathy Abbott of Atlantic Mine came in first with a time of 1:30:16, followed by her daughter Kate Abbott and Cindy Ransom of Houghton in a neck-and-neck battle for second and third places. "She didn't give the old lady any respect!" said the physically-fit 51-year-old Ransom of the 18-year-old Abbott with a laugh. "I didn't know she was there till we were right there (at the finish)." Ransom was the only woman in her age group and, therefore, couldn't compare her times with others her age. She would recommend this race to other mountain bikers. "If a beginner is comfortable with single track, this is a great race to try.

It's a lot of fun."

Sunday's Technical Time Trial held at the Michigan Tech ski trails drew 25 men and three women. In the men's division, Mike Brunet of Marquette took first, followed by Jeff Juntti of Marquette and Tony Schwenn of Copper Harbor. This was the second year for the time trial, and Lori Hauswirth of Houghton took first in the women's category both years. "The time trial was cool because there were options on each of the stunts," Hauswirth said. She rode over a shaved log and some narrow bridges, between trees and over rocks, rocking and rolling through the twisting woods trail to the teeter-totter at the finish. "It was a strategic race depending on your strengths and weaknesses.

Sometimes doing the stunt is quicker, sometimes it's not," she said. "The teeter-totter was definitely the highlight." The teeter-totter was a 10 foot-tall structure which pivoted in the middle. Riders who chose not to ride over it lost time because they had to maneuver through several twists and turns to the finish line. The time trial course and stunts, including the teeter-totter, were built by Nelson Sommerfeldt of Houghton and Tony Schwenn of Copper Harbor. In the women's division, Hauswirth was fol-

lowed by Kathy Abbott of Atlantic Mine in second place and Christine Young of Hancock in third. The top three competitors in both the men's and women's time trial categories were awarded 'Hot Shot' jerseys for their efforts.

On Sunday, there was also a Junior Chain Drive for youth up to age 13. Lots of prizes were given out in several age categories, and all junior riders were entered in a drawing for a brand new bike. Forrest Porkka of Atlantic Mine was the lucky youngster who took home this prize.

The Chain Drive is always held on Father's Day weekend. This year, for the first time, there was a father/child competition in the 16-mile race. No, they didn't compete against each other; their times were added together with prizes being given to the top three pairs. This year's first place combination was Danny Hill and Andrew Hill of Ishpeming.

Complete results can be seen at www.ChainDrive.org. The event is organized by members of the Keweenaw Trekkers with proceeds from the event used to keep trails in the Keweenaw accessible to mountain bikes.



2003 MMBA Championship Point Series

Only 3 races left!!!

9/21/2003 Aspen Park Cross Country

The lucky 13th race in the series is located in Gaylord! The **Aspen Park Singletrack** is located in a rolling 100 acre park that winds through stands of pine, hemlock and live beaver colonies. Watch out for fallen trees! *Note that the race will be staged at the nearby middle school. To get to the school, follow I-75 exit 282 (the north Gaylord exit) and head east (right) towards town. Go through town. At the very edge of town turn right on Maple Street. Follow around curve, the school is on the right and very easy to spot.* Contact: **Tailwind Enterprises, (248) 634-**

9/28/2003 Pando Challenge

This is the **16th** year of racing at Pando! Simply a legendary trail and event. Despite being around so long, the trail is always routed a bit differently every time. Located just north of Grand Rapids. Contact: **Fun Promotions, (616)-453-4245**

10/12/2003 Boyne Challenge

Boyne is one of the premier racing venues in the state because it has it all: great trails, climbs, downhills, technical singletack, scenery, and faculties. This race is also the Fun Promotions State Championships. Contact: **Fun Promotions, (616)-453-4245**



Photo by Bryan Mitchell www.mountainbikemichigan.com

The top Elite Womens racer Susan Schubel riding the switchbacks at Bloomer.

Always check with promoter for information, current start times, race applications, pre-register dates and date of events. All dates on public properties are subject to land manager considerations and it is up to the rider to make sure that times and dates are current and correct. You do not have to be an MMBA member to ride in any of the races listed. However an MMBA membership and an annual \$5 tabulated fee are required to be scored in the points series. It is highly recommended that you renew your membership in the MMBA and pay the tabulation fee prior to the first race you want to count in the MMBA/CPS regardless of when your current membership expires. Inquiries regarding the MMBA Championship Points Series may be directed to the MMBA **CPS Director**.



Racing News

New for 2003 and 2004, the MMBA is proud to announce that Hammer Nutrition will be sponsoring the Championship Point Series! At every CPS race starting with Fort Custer this year and all CPS races next year, all racers will be receiving a Hammer Gel and a sample packet of Endurolytes. For more information about all Hammer Nutrition products, see www.hammergel.com.

Highlights from this years series to date include the Expert 19 and under men, where Ben Renkema and Scott Stewart battling it out in a fierce competition. Both have been finishing far in front of the rest of the pack, with Scott getting the edge one day and Ben getting the honors the next.

Best of luck to both for the rest of the season.

We are starting to plan the 2004 series, so your feedback is very important. If you have compliments, or complaints, take a second to fill out the event survey at www.mmmba.org/racing.htm. Your comments will play an important role in our planning, so let us know what you think.

Thanks,
Shari Scurr MMBA CPS Director cps@mmba.org

Dear Park Supporter,

On behalf of the Cass County Parks Department, I would like to thank Tailwind Enterprises, and all those who raced at Dr. T.K. Lawless Park on August 9th. It was a beautiful day, and thanks to many dedicated volunteers, the trail was in good condition. Due to the tornado of a couple years ago we have had to modify the race course to get the necessary mileage needed. Thanks to all the positive feedback, it looks like those modifications are here to stay for future races. For more trail information or concerns, such as a tree across the trail, please leave a note in the fee booth, call (269) 476-2730, or e-mail me at scottwyman@beanstalk.net.

Thanks again,

Scott Wyman, Director Cass County Parks Department

Iceman Lame Excuse Contest:

Didn't get into the Iceman race? There's still hope by entering the "Lame Excuse Contest".

From Michigan Sports & Fitness Magazine: We are giving away ten entries into the 2003 Subaru Iceman Cometh Mountain challenge mountain bike race. So you still have a chance to join the party, swear at the sand, and pray for snow.

Here's how: Send us an essay with your lame or not-so-lame excuse for not entering on time. Make it good. Cry for us, tell whoppers, beg, grovel, make us laugh and bait us. We'll pick our ten favorites and give them free entries into the Iceman. Don't worry: we'll keep your sad story amongst ourselves (meaning our staff, our legal counsel, and something over 125,000 readers).

Send your entries by email to Nolce@OutdoorAthlete.com or snail mail them to MS&F, 202 Huron View Blvd., Ann Arbor, MI 48103.

Entries must be received by October 6th, 2003, and become the property of Michigan Sports & Fitness Magazine. We pick the winners and that's that. NO whining. Employees of Home Court Communications LLC are ineligible to participate, but then we registered in time.



Photo by Bryan Mitchell www.mountainbikemichigan.com



Women and Bikes

(we might surprise you!)

Photos from the MMBA/DNR Becoming an Outdoor Woman (BOW) mountain bike clinic held back in June of this year. Photos by Tom Lining - www.luv2mtb.net



Keep an eye to the MMBA web site www.mmba.org for announcements on dates for next years BOW clinic!

RIDE FOR THE RIDE by Laura Shiltz

I know what you're thinking, another article on "how we all rode bikes when we were kids". Well, true, but not all of us raced them. I had my first exposure to NORBA racing about two years ago and had my first meeting with Alison Dunlap. I traveled to Snowshoe, West Virginia to see these women in action. At that time, I had been riding mountain bikes for a year. I immediately fell in love with the sport, and then to see the Pro's in action was a dream come true.

As I enter the track to watch them take off, I could feel the energy and excitement in the racers and fans. It over came you and made you want to race. A year later, I would race at Addison Oaks. I raced at Stony Creek that same year, but I finish almost last. I needed to gain exposure and experience in order to be able to focus on attempting three races the next season.

Well here we are, the season for three races. I have so far, raced at Addison Oaks and placed 5th in the beginner's category. I am hoping to race again at Addison Oaks in September and at least beat my time.

After these two races, I have begun to discover what it takes to ride and race. By speaking with a few local racers, I have learned the dedication it takes. The hours and training time they put in amazes me, especially with everyone's busy schedule. I have to give credit where is it due, the local Michigan racers are top notch and I wish more of them will go Pro. We need this kind of dedication in the next round of NORBA racers and fans.

One woman's chronicle of cycling....

by April Wasserman

1968 Received my first Roadmaster bike, single speed, of course, with hard rubber tires. I just turned 7.

1969 10-mile ride to the Girl Scout camp out. Single Speed 24inch bike.

1970-75 Banana seat bike, red white & blue...another Roadmaster. Began to ride ½ mile crits around our neighborhood. Up to 25 laps sometimes, without stopping. Got my first cycling scar when falling in some stones going around a corner too fast- being chased by the neighborhood creep that wanted to kiss me!

1976 AMX Scorcher 10 Speed. Started taking road trips to neighboring communities hoping to get chased by boys!

Used to take 25-30 mile road trips much to the chagrin of my softball coach when I did it on game day. Used to go on overnight road trips with my 2 best friends to other cities, camp and ride home the next day. Average trip-50 miles. Organized several bike rodeos for the city with the police dept. Won a trip to the state fair for 4H in cycling. Did my first Charity ride a bike-a-thon. Still have the certificate!

1980's went to college, watched Breaking Away – knew someday I would ride again.

1986 rode after the birth of my daughter, a few miles a night. Vowed I would ride again.

1992 Saw an MS 150 pledge sheet in the lounge at work....asked, "What is that?"

1993 rode my 1st MS150 on that same 10 speed! (I'm on #10 this year)

1994 Got my Cannondale road bike. Joined the Toledo Area Bicyclists. My son is 3, my daughter 8.

1995 Did my first Century: MADD Anthony River Rally. The ride was 106 miles; I wanted to quit at 100.

1996 Bought a GT Tequesta and began mt. biking.

1997 Did 6 Centuries....2736 road miles, 500 off road. Went to Moab, Utah.

1998 Met the Spokejunkies from Ohio, joined the MMBA, raced at Pontiac Lake, and convinced my daughter to race as well. She wins by 10 min. She is 12, but there is no one she knows who rides bikes. She still doesn't ride (age17).



Photo by Bryan Mitchell www.mountainbikemichigan.com

What a winning smile!



Photo by Alice Mitchell

April doing some winter racing, what a great mom!

1999 Got the Litespeed, went to Cave Run, Kentucky with Gadget for the beginning of what is now the Great Lakes Spokejunkies.

2001 The OMBA (Ohio Mtb Assoc.) is born. Tried the racing scene, converted the GT to a single speed. Raced in the Ohio State SS state championship race- the only female racer. Did my first 24 hr race.

2002 Started riding at the BMX track. I turn 40. Raced the 24 hrs of Snowshoe.

2003 Took a year off from racing, took a vacation to Utah. Will be doing the 24 hrs of Moab.

WOW, when I stop and look at that it's quite a cycling chronicle for a woman. It's exciting to see that women with an interest in cycling and mt biking have so many more opportunities to enjoy their sport now. Initially, when I began riding, there were very few girls who rode bikes other than just to school or to the pool out of transportation necessity.

As I entered into my 20's there were even fewer women riding bikes. Actually, even when I turned 30, the percentage of male vs. female riders was very one sided. Why don't more women ride? In general, most sports were for men and only the "athletic types" participated. One of the major issues with women in mt biking was getting dirty, fear of injury, being sweaty and having helmet hair in front of everyone.

Women were always supposed to be the clean ones, and always working to look their best for the appearance of the family. One of the biggest factors that inhibit women from spending the time to ride and train for racing is the need to be a mother. Most women who have families generally give up a lot of their activities/hobbies to raise their children, a task that takes up most of their day and zaps their energy levels. This is evident with the higher number of women in their late 30's and 40's that have begun to participate in riding. The main reason for that statistic is that the kids are now old enough to baby sit for themselves. Women now also have the ability to spend money on their own interests rather than toward the kid's and family needs. Having their own money to spend; their kids, spouses, or boyfriends ride and are more accepting of women on rides, women specific bikes, clothing, and accessories; and most importantly, a way to vent,

relax and get away from their fast pace lives, draws more women into the sport today.

Why do I ride? Because I like it and I need it. It was my life when young, I was good at it, it gave me freedom, freedom that I would never have experienced having grown up in a rural town in NW Ohio. The bike gave me hope and sanity. It also was a sanctuary away from my family and school work for a few hours. I had

continued on next page

Karen Millar gets married!

Karen Millar, long time MMBA member, former BRB co-editor and Mountain Kids director, met Richard Kendall at a Cyclocross Race in Michigan. After a few months the couple realized they had found their soul mates. Both love the outdoors and participate in backpacking, skiing, camping and mt biking. After Rich finished his fellowship in Spinal Rehab Medicine at U of M he and Karen moved to Salt Lake City to begin their lives together in the middle of "outdoor" heaven.

On July 5th 2003 my friend Karen got married to her soul mate Richard (Rich) Kendall. The wedding was held at beautiful Solitude Mt. Resort in the Wasatch Mts. Near Salt Lake City Utah. The bride's sister performed the wedding outside back dropped by mountains, pine trees, rocks and a field of daisies, . The Bride and Groom posed for pictures on the rocks, in the daisies and on their bikes!

Keeping with the outdoor theme the reception tables were decorated with pictures from their outdoor adventures together. And of course there was "Single Track" groom's cake for the guests. Family, close friends and co-workers helped the couple celebrate their special day into the night with music, a gourmet prepared dinner and libations! Karen & Rich may your love for life and the outdoors continue to grow and be enriched by your love for each other. Congratulations!

Story and photos submitted by April Wasserman

woman's chronicle continued a few years away from riding during my twenties. Since I returned to the sport I pray that I will never stop riding again. Now I find the time on the bike as a time away from the troubles of life. I still feel the freedom of youth, long for the breeze in my face, the smells of the great outdoors. I toyed with racing for a couple of years, but found that it was not allowing me to feel the freedom of old. I like to ride when I want, how I want, where I want and not have to worry about how it will affect my race on Sunday. There is a place for competitive riding, but at this point in my life I need the quiet solitude of a ride through the pines. Someday when the stress of working 2 jobs and raising 2 kids lessens, I may want to try racing again. I still enjoy personal challenge races, such as 24 hr endurance races, racing in the snow, racing on a rigid SS and I always love racing at my friend's grass roots events. (COMBO's AEP Ohio SS State Championship, and the races at Heritage Park in Adrian.)

It is very exciting to see all of the women entering the sport today. When I started riding it was just me and the guys. I never met another woman who rode a mountain bike until I had been riding for 2 years. The BOW Women's MTB Clinics, the Girlbike rides and the acceptance of women at local regular rides have helped to open up the sport to women. I do think, had I not gone with my 2 childhood friends on the early road trips, I may not have fallen in love with cycling. It's important at a young age to have fellow female cyclists. Keep those young girls interested. Ride with them, cheer for them, encourage them, answer questions and hang out with them at rides, let them know that when they grow up, they can still enjoy riding like they do now. Once you get to adulthood, it becomes your own decision and each of us has our reasons for riding. I believe that once you are hooked, you are in it for life. Deep in the back of your mind, as you graduate, go to college and begin your life and family you will hear a voice saying "I will ride again."

The Trail Ahead continued from page 2

(try downhilling on skinny XC skis, or climbing on freestyle boards), and where the purists in one field may barely be on speaking terms with the others.

My hope is that fat-tire cycling, at least in Michigan, follows the kayaking pattern. We have geography that offers diversity without extremity (no 4,000-foot elevation changes here), encouraging riders to experiment with a variety of riding styles. It's probably no accident that the greatest "do-it-all" rider of all time, John Tomac, was from Michigan's heartland. Johnnie was a world-class XC and DH star, and a roadie -- all at the same time.

While no individual may ever reach that peak again, I believe an organization can. We're a team where the strengths of each cover the weaknesses of the others. As the sport continues to evolve, we must make the effort to include the emerging developments. Remember, to the outside world—the politicians, the planners, the police-- we're all cyclists.





International Mountain Bicycling Association

Dear MMBA:

I would just like to thank you for your efforts in maintaining all the wonderful trails in Michigan.

Being a Hoosier, I've had the opportunity to ride Fort Custer, Yankee Springs and T.K. Lawless parks many a time. It is quite evident MMBA members have put in the time and effort to keep the trail systems in great condition. Keep up the great work.

Thank You,
Gary Andert
South Bend, Indiana

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Photo by Bryan Mitchell www.mountainbikemichigan.com

Chapter Chatter

Potawatomi Chapter News

Upcoming Events:

Batman Ride

Date/Time: October 10/7:00am

Location: Pinckney Rec Area, Crooked Lake Campground

NIGHT RIDE THE POTO!!! Campfire and grillin' after the ride. A few of us will be camping over night, please contact rhurst1@ford.com for group reservations. Rain date on Oct 18.

Trail Work Day

Date/Time: October 11/9:30am

Location: Pinckney Rec Area, Ranger Station

Prepare the Poto for the winter and spring thaw. Clean out water bars and dig drainage trenches.

Abominable Snowman Ride

Date/Time: December 14/10:00am

Location: Pinckney Rec Area, Dexter Bike & Sport Cabin

Ride the frozen trail of the Poto or if we are lucky a little dusting of snow. If the trail is icy studded tires are highly recommended. Campfire, hot drink and a grill will be available.

Thursday Night Rides

Time: meet 5:30pm/ ride 6:00pm

Location: Pinckney Rec. Area, Silver Lake Parking Lot
(Last Thursday of the month Brighton Rec. Area, Bishop Lake Parking Lot)

Thursday Night Rides are still going and will keep going into the night riding season. Eventually we will be starting the ride in the light and finishing in the night.

All events may change please contact rhurst1@ford.com for up-to-date details

Southeast Chapter News

"I just revisited the Lakeshore trail after a 3 year, "I'll never go back to that boring, poorly marked trail that I got lost on for an hour" promise I made myself. To say that the trail system is enhanced is an understatement!

It was so fun, I can't believe it's on the same land as the old one. As a regular rider of Highland, Pontiac and Poto, Lakeshore is as every bit as fun and has just as much to offer in its own unique way. Great job and pass this and a THANK YOU to all who worked on that trail. Keep it up!"

Tony Emmer

News: Well it has been a busy season thus far, we have been adding more trail at Hickory Glenn in Commerce Twp. Some new trails were added to Novi to help complete our MTB loop. Signage has been installed at both parks to help reduce confu-

sion. The weekly group ride at Novi has grown to nearly 50 riders regularly braving the weather and grabbing a beer afterwards at the Lakeshore Grill. If you have questions or would like info on any Southeast trails please e-mail southeast@mmba.org

Trail developments:

Lakeshore Park (AKA Novi Tree Farm): (*look for fall trail days posted online*)

Lake Shore Park had a little set back since the last BRB, with more land and trail being cleared. While the small section that was lost had been in question since last year...it is still sad to see some favorite sections disrupted. Kevin Campbell has taken charge of updating the signage and mapping out there, he is having a new trail head sign/map made which the Southeast Chapter is paying for. Even with the small problems and trying to catch up on signage, clear dead fall, and the latest trail loss. The response to the new Novi Tree Farm has been overwhelmingly positive. If you haven't ridden there in over a year...you'll be pleasantly surprised. For those who are interested in a tour, the Tuesday night rides (6:30pm) offer a social group ride lead by the trail experts. Don't forget about the upcoming Southeast Chapter Tree Farm MTB Festival October 19th Thanks to all the volunteers (especially Kevin) for stepping in and taking charge of the trail system.

Bloomer:

Art Fleming (AKA Blumerdude) has told me he plans to have impromptu workdays at Bloomer every Saturday in October.

Bloomer Park: Every Sat morning in October, 8:15 a.m. in the parking lot closest to the velodrome. Usually 3-4 hours each morning.

Commerce Trail:

We came we saw we built! Yes we now have over 3 miles of single track, tight, twisty...and still a little soft. The trail needs riders; Kevin Campbell has marked a route including the two trail trails to get a 4-5 mile loop. With some luck we'll have another mile of single track by the time you read this. The push for more trails in this park will continue next season and we'll be walking the grounds in there fall again to see what other potential is there. If you would like to help out please send an e-mail to sheraboy@trails-edge.com or southeast@mmba.org. Look for workdays to be posted on the MMBA website.

Hines Park Project:

Well after some re-flagging hiking and meeting with the Wayne Co. Parks and Rec. and their naturalist the project is getting closer. While we won't be building this year, I am confident next spring will open with new trail construction on this long awaited project. In the mean time we will be working to put an MOU together for future projects and re-flagging this potential trail in the fall. We have two more pre-trail walks to do with Wayne Co. officials and we'll be ready to start.

For those who are unfamiliar with Hines Park Drive, it follows the Rouge River from Northville to Dearborn. Our project will hopefully open up the possibility of additional small single track along the 16 mile Hines Park pathway.

Upcoming events:

Southeast Chapter Tree Farm MTB festival...okay it's really the second annual B4 (BBBB). The date is Sunday October 19th. Last year was a lot of fun and more people have become interested in joining the party. I have been planning on having some more events or activities for all to enjoy. I would like to have some free clinics such as bike repair, and basic riding skills. Jerry Serra has agreed to help us out again with some great

grub and fire pit. There are several other shops and organizations that will be holding free clinics (riding, repair, etc.).

The event will be a SE Chapter benefit and we are looking for industry support. MMBA member shops are welcome to set up again as last year, please contact me for details and space assignment. Check the MMBA Bulletin Board regularly for details. Some details from last year <http://www.trails-edge.com/bbbb/bbbb.htm>

Northeast Chapter News

New Northeast Chapter President

I am stepping down as the president for the Northeast chapter. As most of you know, I was involved in a diving accident in August that put me in a wheelchair. I feel that the chapter will be better represented by someone that is still an active biker.

I have enjoyed working with all of you over the past few years. Thank you all for your support! I am still a mountain biker at heart and will find a way through medical science or new bike technology to join you on the trails someday soon.

Kevin Bouck was elected as the new president at our most recent meeting. Many of you already know Kevin since he was the chapter president before me. He has been an active member of our chapter for many years and I am confident will do an excellent job representing our chapter as he has in the past.

Sincerely,
Nick Long

Northern Chapter News

Chatter from a rambling rider

This riding season has been great being the northern chapter president. I had the opportunity to ride many of our trails to document them, GPS them, take photos and more important, meet new riders from all over our state. My rides included the Big M in Manistee, parts of the North Country Trail, Shingle Mill Pathway, High Country Pathway and more.

My travels started with a hangover for my Big M ride in April. Brian from Bent Crank Cyclery hooked up the ride date and brought out a dozen or so riders from that area. Ken Blakey-Shell, the new trail coordinator for the Big M, has been working very well with the USFS in developing a good relationship and putting in new trails. If you haven't been out there yet, you definitely need to check it out. Very cool hills, hard, long climbs, fast descents and fabulous views all make the Big M the place to ride.

My regular riding spots include Hanson Hills in Grayling which happens to have a new recreation director who is pro mountain biking. Justin Andre, the new director, opened up just over a mile of new trail and plans on adding several more miles over the next year or so. He has also offered up Hanson Hills to a mountain bike festival! More on that later.

In addition to some really cool trails, I visited Seney Wildlife Refuge just north of Blaney Park in the U.P. I rode up from U.S. 2 in Curtis and rode through the refuge. This place is mostly two tracks and gravel roads, however there are some remote paths and trails that take you deep into some wet areas. When I went, I wanted to explore these areas to get closer to the birds and other wildlife; however the bugs were really thick. This place is really worth checking out and riding through if you ever get the chance.

I made it a point to check out two festivals this year as well. I attended the Keweenaw Chain Drive Festival over Father's day weekend in June. What a riot! The course was really great with a mass start in Houghton with the finish in Hancock at the hospital. Several hundred riders were present and they brought a lot of color especially Blue. Blue is a local rider who is hard core and quite a character. I had the opportunity to hang out and check out the local area with him and his buddy, Matt. This is a must do, family event that really does a great job focusing on the family benefits of racing mountain bikes together.

The other event I attended was the legendary Ore To Shore in Marquette. Instead of racing this time, I supported several riders and their individual efforts. This is one big, organized event. We had very good success with our booth at the trade show Friday evening. We sold merchandise and over 250 Raffle tickets! As always, Marquette is a very cool place to be. Great rides, food, beer and entertainment. If you like to camp, you need to camp at Gitche Gumee RV Park and Campground.

My goal as the northern chapter president has been to ride every trail in the chapter and GPS and digitally photograph it so we can have this information available on our web site. If next year is anything like what did this year, I think I will take my time riding these trails. They are the best trails in Michigan. Come on up and visit and ride our trails. Please remember to take out what you bring in. See you on the trails!

Ride On!
Eric Isaacsen - Northern Chapter president



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The stores and services listed below are MMBA Members as of June 2003. Those listed in bold text give 10% discounts to MMBA members! It wouldn't hurt to thank them all the next time you're in their shop.

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(313) 382-1990

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(231) 882-7793

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Bike USA, Inc.
(248) 594-8850

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(810) 632-6325
www.k2bike.com

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www.dexterbikeandsport.com

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(810) 232-2994
www.assenmachers.com

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www.scarlettsbikeandfitness.com

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Zeeland

Zeeland Schwinn Cycling &
Fitness (616) 722-6223

Please send corrections to BRB@MMBA.ORG or call (248) 349-1937

Southeast Michigan Rail-Trail Updates

Clinton River Trail

Construction of the trail bridge over I-75 is coming along nicely according to Brian Marzolf, head of Parks and Recreation in Auburn Hills. It may be completed by the time you read this. Rochester Hills has gotten money to develop all the trail road crossings as well as a bridge over the Clinton River behind Rochester College. Work may begin as early as this fall. For more information, visit www.clintonrivertrail.org.

Coe Railroad/Dinner Train

To the west of the Clinton River Trail is the existing West Bloomfield trail. This trail ends just past Drake where the Coe Railroad starts. The rail lines continue west to Wixom. The Huron Valley trail starts where the railroad ends, connecting Wixom to South Lyon, Island Lake, and Kensington. Obviously it would be great if the trail wasn't interrupted by the railroad and fortunately the communities feel the same. They've looked at putting the trail alongside the tracks, but they'd need to purchase additional land and deal with wetlands. It'd be less expensive to simply buy the railroad. The eventual outcome remains to be seen.

Below are additional MMBA corporate sponsors.

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www.iceman.com

Tailwind Enterprises
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www.tailwind.net

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www.zoo-de-mack.com

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Photo guidelines: Make sure photos are in focus, the subject is fairly close and they are interesting. Also try to make sure faces are lit well. Email photos to bryan@mitchell.com. Keep the files large. Try to send sizes of at least 5X7 at a resolution of 300ppi. (2000X2000 pixels and a file size of at least 2 mb) Email photos as JPEG attachments and don't imbed them in documents like Microsoft Word. (make sure they have .jpg at the end of the file name).

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Cover photo: Chris "Crispy" Filipiak rides the Segment A section of the North Country Trail near the town of Mesick in Northwest Michigan.

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